

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 04494 161524Z
ACTION ARA-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TBIO, SWEL, OCON, SHUM, AR
SUBJ: 12TH INTERNATIONAL CANCER CONGRESS, BUENOS AIRES, OCTOBER
5-11, 1978

1. EMBASSY HAS BEEN AWARE FOR SOME TIME OF PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY HERE AND IN INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEES FOR THIS IMPORTANT CONGRESS. THIS WORK HAS BEEN GOING ON FOR OVER TWO YEARS AND MANY IMPORTANT ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE. USG AND OTHER U.S. MEDICAL PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN ORGANIZING COMMITTEE MEETINGS. G.T. O'CONER OF THE NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE WAS RECENTLY HERE FOR A MEETING OF THE SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM COMMITTEE. (SEE BUENOS AIRES 2535.) IN RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONGRESS TO THE WAR AGAINST CANCER, THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE HAS AWARDED A RESEARCH GRANT TO THE CONGRESS ORGANIZERS. (STATE A-1569).

2. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE DECISION TO HOLD THIS CONGRESS IN BUENOS AIRES WAS MADE AT THE 11TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS HELD IN FLORENCE, ITALY. IT WAS, IN THE NORMAL COURSE OF EVENTS, LATIN AMERICA'S TURN TO HOST THIS CONGRESS; ARGENTINA OFFERED; AND IT WAS AGREED. BUENOS AIRES, AS ONE OF S.AMERICA'S LARGEST CITIES, WAS ABLE TO OFFER THE NECESSARY FACILITIES FOR SUCH A MEETING, WHICH PROMISES TO BE ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST MEDICAL CONGRESSES EVER HELD, AND PERHAPS THE LARGEST.

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3. THE PRESIDENT OF THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE FOR THIS CONGRESS, DR. ABEL N. CANONICO, WHO IS WELL AND FAVORABLY KNOWN TO THIS EMBASSY, RECENT PAID US A SPECIAL VISIT TO REPORT HIS GREAT CONCERN AT RECENT NEWS HE HAS HEARD FROM THE U.S. CONCERNING ATTITUDES TOWARD THE CONGRESS. IN PARTICULAR, IT HAD COME TO HIS ATTENTION THAT SOME AMERICAN CANCER RESEARCHERS, INCLUDING

SOME IMPORTANT ONES WHO WERE OFFICIALS OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, HAVE RECENTLY DECLINED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CONGRESS. FURTHER, AT LEAST ONE OF THEM, DR. WILLIAM D. TERRY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR IMMUNOLOGY, DIV. OF CANCER BIOLOGY AND DIAGNOSIS, NIH, WAS WRITING TO OTHER INVITED SYMPOSIUM OR SESSION CHAIRPERSONS AND OTHERS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD URGING THEM TO WORK TO CHANGE THE CONGRESS VENUE. DR. TERRY'S STATED REASON, AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, IS THAT THE ACTIONS OF ARGENTINE AUTHORITIES REGARDING SCIENTISTS AND OTHER DECISION GROUPS MAKE ARGENTINA AN INAPPROPRIATE COUNTRY IN WHICH TO HOLD THE CONGRESS. AT LEAST ONE OTHER NIH OFFICIAL WHOM WE KNOW OF, COSTAN W. BARARD, HEAD, HEMATOPATHOLOGY SECTION, PATHOLOGY LABORATORY, HAS AGREED WITH DR. TERRY AND DECLINED TO ATTEND THE CONGRESS IF IT IS HELD IN ARGENTINA.

4. DR. CANONICO SENT COPIES OF DR. TERRY AND DR. BERARD'S LETTERS TO THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTRY. MINISTRY OFFICIALS HAVE COMPLAINED TO THE EMBASSY THAT THE LETTERS WERE WRITTEN ON DEPT OF HEW STATIONERY, LENDING THE IMPRESSION THAT THE DOCTORS' PERSONAL VIEWS REFLECTED THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF THE USG.

5. WE RESPECT DR. TERRY AND DR. BERARD'S PREROGATIVE TO ATTEMPT TO EXERCISE INFLUENCE OVER THE STRUCTURING OF A PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE TO WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THEIR PRIVATE CAPACITY. HOWEVER, WE THINK THEY SHOULD HAVE TAKEN GREATER PAINS TO AVOID THEIR VIEWS BEING CONFUSED WITH THOSE OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. WE HAD BEEN UNDER THE IMPRESSION, AND STILL ARE AT THIS POINT, THAT CANCER RESEARCH WAS AN EXTREMELY HIGH PRIORITY PROGRAM IN UNCLASSIFIED

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THE U.S., ONE THAT WE WISHED TO ENCOURAGE WORLDWIDE, AND THAT SUCH AN EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE, THEORIES, AND IDEAS AS WILL OCCUR AT THE 12TH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS WOULD BE EXTREMELY WORTHWHILE IS SAID EFFORT.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: ASSUMING DEPT AND NIH OFFICIALLY CONTINUE TO GIVE FULL SUPPORT TO THE 12TH INTERNATIONAL CANCER CONGRESS, WE WOULD APPRECIATE A STATEMENT TO THAT EFFECT TO PASS TO DR. CANONICO AND TO FOREIGN MINISTRY.
CHAPLIN

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